

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraphs of the Summary of the Invention with the following amended Summary of the Invention:

~~In general, methods and articles of the invention employ attachment sites at front portions of absorbent articles of the invention to provide a support mechanism whereby the front panel of a respective absorbent article, and/or absorbent article component(s) associated therewith, is prevented from folding, shifting, bunching and/or twisting during one or both the manufacturing process, and putting such absorbent article on a wearer e.g. as a pull-on pant.~~

In one aspect of the invention, a personal care article has a longitudinal axis, and includes a front portion having a front end, a second end, a first side edge, a second side edge, and a fastener receptive area. The personal care article also has a first lateral section and a second lateral section, each of the first and second lateral sections having an inner portion, and an outer portion including an outer edge, the outer portion being defined between the fastener receptive area on the front portion and the outer edge of the lateral section. A releasable fastener on the inner portion has an inner edge and an outer edge and is releasably fastened to the fastener receptive area closer to the longitudinal axis than to the respective outer edge of the corresponding lateral section. The outer portion of each lateral section is attached at at least one attachment site to the front portion inwardly of, but... adjacent, one of the first and second side edges of the front portion. One or more of the attachment sites on the corresponding outer portion, which are closest to the inner edge of the releasable fastener, are also closer to the respective side edge of the front portion than to the inner edge of the releasable fastener, the outer edges of the releasable fasteners being spaced apart from each other and being configured for adjustment at least in a direction toward each other. A back portion of the personal care article has a back end, a third side edge and a fourth side edge. A crotch portion of the personal care article is located between the front portion and the back portion. A strength of attachment at the attachment sites of the outer portions of the first and second lateral sections to the front portion is sufficiently weak such that the attachment sites can be separated from the front portion to adjust the releasable fastener without substantially fracturing the front portion, the attachment sites being configured to remain intact when the outer edges of the releasable fasteners are lifted away from the fastener receptive area and moved toward each other to adjust a size of the personal care article. Each of the outer portions of the first and second lateral sections is secured to one of the third and fourth side edges of the back portion to form a pant-like article having a waist opening, and first and second leg openings. An absorbent core is attached to at least one of the front portion, the back portion, and the crotch portion. The attachment of the outer portions of the lateral sections to the front portion is formed by at least one of adhesive bonds, ultrasonic bonds, thermally activated bonds, hook and loop fastening, snaps, buttons, tapes, needle punching, and piercing. The first and second lateral sections generally overlie the front portion. Also, the side edges of the first and second lateral sections are aligned in an abutting relationship. The inner edges are joined together at a line of weakness. The strength of attachment of the outer portions of the first and second lateral sections to the front portion is less than strength of the securement of the outer portions of the first and second lateral sections to the back portion, whereby attachment of the outer portions of the first and second lateral sections to the front portion can be separated

from the front portion without separating the securement of the first and second lateral sections from the third and fourth side edges of the back portion. Also in this aspect of the invention, the first and second lateral sections are directly secured to respective third and fourth side edges of the back portion, without intervening material between the lateral sections and the back portion. Moreover, the personal care article includes an absorbent core attached to at least one of the front portion, the back portion, and the crotch portion. The attachment at the attachment sites between the outer portions of the lateral sections and the front portion includes at least one of adhesive bonds, ultrasonic bonds, hook and loop fastening, snaps, buttons, tapes, needle punching, piercing, and thermally activated bonding. Also, the first and second lateral sections generally overlie the front portion. The inner edges of the first and second lateral sections are aligned in an abutting relationship in this aspect. The inner edges are joined together at a line of weakness.

In another aspect of the invention, a personal care article includes a front portion having a front end, a second end, a first side edge, a second side edge, and a fastener receptive area; a first lateral section and a second lateral section, each of the first and second lateral sections having an inner portion, and an outer portion including an outer edge, the outer portion being defined between the fastener receptive area on the front portion and the outer edge of the lateral section, a releasable fastener on each of the inner portion portions having an inner edge end and an outer end and being releasably fastened to the fastener receptive area on the front portion, the outer ends being closer to a longitudinal axis of the personal care article than to the respective outer edge of the corresponding lateral section, the outer portion of each lateral section being attached at at least one attachment site to the front portion inwardly of but adjacent the respective one of the first and second side edges of the front portion, the one or more of the at least one attachment sites on the corresponding outer portion closest to the inner edge of the releasable fastener being closer to the respective side edge of the front portion than to the inner edge of the releasable fastener, the first and second lateral sections configured to be stretchable relative to the fastener receptive area with the releasable fastener fastened in the fastener receptive area when the personal care article is worn as a pant; a back portion having a back end, a third side edge and a fourth side edge; and a crotch portion between said front portion and said back portion, wherein strength of attachment at the attachment sites of the outer portions of the first and second lateral sections to the front portion is sufficiently weak such that the attachment sites can be separated from the front portion without fracturing the front portion, the attachment sites when intact configured to stabilize the first and second lateral sections relative to said longitudinal axis, the attachment sites being attached at each lateral section such that respective attachment sites move with respective lateral sections as the lateral sections stretch away from or toward the longitudinal axis when the personal care article is worn as the pant, the outer ends being configured to be lifted away from the fastener receptive area without breaking the attachment sites and moved in a direction towards each other to adjust a size of the personal care article. Attachment at the attachment sites between the outer portions of the lateral sections and the front portion includes at least one of adhesive bonds, ultrasonic bonds, hook-and-loop fastening, snaps, buttons, tapes, needle punching, piercing, thermally activated bonding, and combinations thereof. The first and second lateral sections overlie a portion of the front portion, each of the first and second lateral sections being free from direct attachment at a free area disposed between the releasable fastener at the respective inner portion and the attachment site adjacent the first and second side edges of the front portion.

~~An absorbent core can be attached to at least one of the front portion, the back portion, and the crotch portion.~~

~~Preferably, the attachment of the outer portions of the lateral sections to the front portion comprises employment of at least one of adhesive bonds, ultrasonic bonds, thermally activated bonds, hook and loop fastening, snaps, buttons, tapes, needle punching, and piercing.~~

Please replace the third full paragraph on page 13 of the Specification beginning at line 20 with the following amended paragraph:

Elasticity can be imparted to first and second lateral sections 28 and 29 by employing a resiliently extensible material. Such resiliently extensible material can comprise multiple elastics 52, as shown in FIGURES 1 and 3. Such elastic 52 can vary in size, length, and shape. Elongated elastic ribbons, elastic strips, elastic bands, elastic tape having round, flat or other cross-sectional configuration can also be used. Such ribbons, strips, bands, strands, or elastic tape can correspond with a relatively small (e.g., less than 10 percent) fraction of the areas of the lateral section, up to and including 100 percent of the fraction of the areas of the lateral sections. The greater the fraction of the area covered by the elastic, the greater the opportunity for employing a relatively smaller number of elastic elements. To the extent a contiguous area is to be covered, the elastic can comprise a single element, covering up to 100 percent of the area of the respective lateral sections. As noted above with respect to FIGURE 2, the attachment sites 46 are attached to lateral sections 28 and 29 to be selectively broken on one or both of the lateral sections 28 and 29. Before such breakage, the attachment sites 46 will move with, or ride on, the surrounding resiliently extensible material of lateral sections 28 and 29 as the lateral sections 28 and 29 stretch during wearing of ~~when the personal care article 10 is worn~~ as a pant-like structure.

Please replace the first paragraph on page 15 of the Specification with the following amended paragraph:

In the embodiment illustrated in FIGURE 2, inner portions 36A and 36B of first and second lateral sections 28 and 29 are releasably fastened to front portion 20 by fasteners 31A and 31B. In FIGURES 1 and 2, fastener-receptive area 56 on front portion 20, and fasteners 31A and 31B ~~[[on]] attached to the lateral sections 28 and 29~~, cooperate to fasten inner portions 36A and 36B of the lateral sections ~~28 and 29~~ to front portion 20. ~~As previously discussed, front portion 20 can be constructed from a material which has fastener-receptive properties. In the alternative, a separate piece of landing zone material can be secured in the front portion to provide such fastener-receptive properties to the front portion so as to enable cooperative fastening of corresponding first and second lateral sections 28 and 29 to front portion 20 using fastening techniques discussed herein.~~

More specifically, as shown in FIGURE 2, a free area F indicates an unattached, floating area between the front portion 20 and the first and second lateral sections 28,29. Further, with reference to FIGURES 1-3, each fastener 31A and 31B has a first or outer end or edge 31Aa, 31Ba and a second or inner end or edge 31Ab, 31Bb. As shown, the outer ends 31Aa, 31Ba are spaced apart from each other in the fastener-receptive area 56, and the inner ends 31Ab, 31Bb face the attachment sites 46. As shown most clearly in FIGURE 3, the outer ends 31Aa, 31Ba of respective fasteners 31A and 31B can be lifted away from the fastener-receptive area 56 and adjusted toward each other to make the without breaking any of the

attachment sites 46, which would otherwise make the first and second lateral sections 28 and 29 susceptible to shifting and rolling over on themselves.

Please add the following new paragraph after the foregoing paragraph:

As previously discussed, front portion 20 can be constructed from a material which has fastener-receptive properties. In the alternative, a separate piece of landing zone material can be secured in the front portion to provide such fastener-receptive properties to the front portion so as to enable cooperative fastening of corresponding first and second lateral sections 28 and 29 to front portion 20 using fastening techniques discussed herein.